

MSFC Guidelines for

PORTABLE LADDER SAFETY



Using the Right Ladder for the Job

The first step is to select the right ladder for the job. Make sure you are familiar with its length limits. Ladders that are too short or too tall for a particular task can lead to an accident.

Stepladders should be no longer than 20 feet.

One-section straight and extension ladders should not exceed 30 feet.

Verify that the ladder has a 1-A Rating.

Ladders shall be approved for electrical use around live electrical parts.

Ladder Condition

Before use, check the ladder to be sure it is in good condition, if not it must be tagged out and repaired before being used.

Look for the following defects:

1. Safety feet are missing/damaged if applicable.
2. Wood Ladders painted.
3. Splinters on wood ladders.
4. Sharp edges on metal ladders.
5. Steps or rungs are missing or loose.
6. Steps or rungs are covered with oil or grease.
7. Steps or rungs are not fitted with slip resistant material.
8. Spreader bar is damaged on the stepladder.
9. Support, braces, bolts or screws are loose.

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Correct Use of the Ladder

After selecting the proper ladder for the job and it is in good repair, follow these simple guidelines to use the ladder safely:

General

1. Hold the ladder with both hands while climbing up or down.
2. Always face the ladder at all times while climbing up or down.
3. Keep your body inside the rails (never lean outside the rails).
4. Use proper shoes (no oil or grease on soles).
5. Always carry tools in a tool belt or raise with a rope.
6. Be sure the ladder is level and on firm ground.
7. Never use a metal ladder when working around electrical equipment (always keep safe clearance).
8. Assure the feet of the ladder are in good condition.
9. If the ladder is positioned by a door or walkway, make sure the door is locked or the hallway is barricaded.

Stepladders

1. Never go higher than the second step from the top.
2. Make sure the spreader bar and ladder are fully open.

Straight or Extension Ladders

1. Never go higher than the third rung from the top.
2. Always secure the ladder at the top and bottom, or have someone hold the bottom, and secure the top.
3. Place the ladder at a safe angle. The distance from the bottom of the ladder to the wall should be one-fourth of the ladders height.
4. Ladder shall extend at least 3 feet past its support point or landing.